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Cox Says Cover-Up Inferred

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., May 27 (AP)—Archibald Cox, former Watergate special prosecutor fired by President Nixon, said today there is "certainly a permissible inference" that the President was involved in the Watergate cover-up.

He told a news conference that he reached this conclusion after reading the transcripts of the White House conversations between Nixon and his top aides concerning the possibility of paying hush money to the Watergate burglars.

"Like all inferences, you don't have to draw it," he added.

Cox covered much of the same ground in the commencement speech he later made at the University of Virginia Law School.

On both occasions, he said he believed there are three potential grounds for impeaching President Nixon.

The strongest, he said, would be if the question of providing White House tapes went to the Supreme Court and the President ignored an order of the court to relinquish them.

"Failure to comply would, in my judgment, be the most serious of impeachable offenses," the Harvard law professor said.

Such a refusal, he said, "would in truth defy the essential constitutional guarantee that the executive be under the law" and "would assert an arbitrary, executive power to block full and impartial inquiry into executive wrongdoing."

Cox said he felt that another ground for impeachment would be the withholding from the House Judiciary Committee evidence that it judges necessary to the Watergate inquiry.

This, he said, is "a defiance of the only process the Constitution provides for dealing with substantial charges against a President and reasserting our demands for integrity and morality in government."

Cox said that even if Mr. Nixon had fully cooperated with the Watergate investigation, there still might be grounds for impeachment in his failure to restrain and direct the activities of the Committee to Re-Elect the President and those White House aides linked with the Watergate scandal.